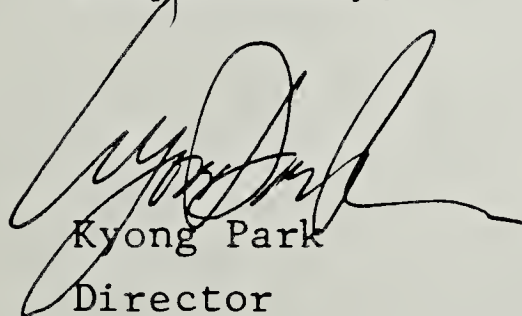April 23, 1987

Coop Himmelblau
Seilerstatte 16/11
A-1010
Wein, Austria

Dear Mr. Wolf D.Prix and Mr. Helmut Swizcinsky:

Under the recommendation of Lebbeus Woods and Dennis Dollens,
STOREFRONT for Art and Architecture would like to invite
an exhibition of your works during the late fall of 1987.
STOREFRONT is a collective forum of independent artists
and architects, and is the only experimental gallery for
architecture in New York. To briefly introduce STOREFRONT,
I have included recent publications about this organization
for your attention. I hope you will consider this invitation
for an exhibition, and please contact me for further discussion.

Respectfully,

Kyong Park
Director

cc: Lebbeus Woods, Dennis Dollens.

COOP HIMMELBLAU
Vienna · Los Angeles

Wolf D. Prix   **H. Swiczinsky**

A-1010 Wien, Seilerstätte 16/11 a
Tel. (0222) 512 02 84-0, 512 34 45
Telefax (0222) 513 47 54-21

8561 Higuera Street
Culver City CA 90232
(310) 838 8264, Fax (310) 838 8267

To
Mr. Kyong Park
c/o Storefront

47 Kenmore Street
N.Y., N.Y., 10012
U.S.a.

Vienna 1993-12-20th
TW/eh

Re: "The Dissipation of Our Bodies in the City"
      for Storefront

Dear Mr. Park,

Please find enclosed the photomaterial and text of the COOP HIMMELBLAU project "The Dissipation of our Bodies in the City". The material enclodies 4 lasercopies and 4 idential slides for you to use as you please. The sequence of these is marked by numeration. We ask you kindly to return the photomaterial as soon as possible along with 3 copies of the issue in question.

For any other question please dont`t hesitate to contact us.

Best regards

COOP HIMMELBLAU VIE

i·A·Edith Hanke

Tanja Widman
Public Relations

Enclosure: 4 Lasercopies/ 4 colorslides "The Dissipation of Our Bodies in the City" Nr.
            1-4, Text

The Dissipation of Our Bodies in the City

We love to design (the) lines and surfaces of the
City, the ones that do not exist yet. To discover
and visibly draw the ones that are invisible.
Just as we love to build buildings and their shadows.

In recent years - since about 1978 - we began - without
knowing where it would lead us to - to density and
shorter the time of the design process. That's to say,
discussion about the project are certainly held at
length. But always without thinking of spatially
conceivable consequences.
And then suddenly: the drawing is there. On the wall,
on the table, on a piece of paper.
Somewhere.

And always and simultaniously there is the model (in
no scale).

This is how it works: Coop Himmelblau is a team. There
are two of us. While drawing, architecture is captured
in words, the drawing is narrated into the three-
dimensional material of the model. (We can't prove it,
but we surmise very strongly that the more intensely
the design is experienced by the designer, the better
the built space will will be experienced.

Last year we noticed that we gradually began to emphasize
the verbal description of the design with gestures of
our hands. And with porjects for Paris and Vienna, the
language of the body was the better drawing and the first
model.

And when we began to work on the projects for the cities
NY and Berlin, the face and body of these cities became
more and more destinct: On a team photo of Coop Himmelblau,
we began to see and draw the lines and surfaces of the
city. Our eyes became towers, our foreheads bridges, the
faces became landscapes, and our shirts site-plans.

Superimposing the existing city map and the new drawing,
the contours, lines and surfaces of the faces and bodies,
previously so important, gradually vanished in the whirl
of existing planning. Yet the lines, fields and surfaces
of the new structure delinate themselves clearly, ever
more clearly. The became three-dimensional and cast shadows.

Now we are going to enlarge our team photo, step by step,
until just the pupils of the eyes are visible. They are
the plan of a tall building, and we intend to build it.

COOP HIMMELBLAU (1988)

Coop Himmelblau's Storefront Manifesto

Dennis L. Dollens

The step into Manhattan's Storefront for Art and Architecture by Coop
Himmelblau is more than a first gallery presentation for the
Austrian-based architectural office. It is a tough-minded graphic
manifesto, a body of information and a textural machine. For viewers
coming complacently seeking didactic architecture, or for those
peeping-Toms coming to sniff and run with a detail, an elevation, or
section, the exhibition will be of little interest; it is graphically
almost impossible to plagiarize. Adolf Loos's statement "I do not design
plans, facades, sections; I design space" is relevant, though not fully
descriptive of the drawings, processed images, and text in the exhibition.

    If conceived in metaphors based on electronic terminology, the
exhibition is an integrated circuit where graphic images replace
semiconductors and drawings and collages cum maquettes stand in for
resistors and capacitors. So, like an electronic circuit, there is a
multilevel flow of information constantly being processed, schematically
giving portions of the exhibition the feel of a printed-circuit board,
appropriate to Coop Himmelblau's use of technological images made of FAX
and photocopy graphics. These component images, never intended to stand
alone graphically, may be divided into several groups. One
photographically depicts three previous projects: the 1983 Open House, the
1987 Ronacher Theater, and the 1987 Paris/Melunt Senart City Plan;
another, titled "The 1st new step into New York: the bodies disappear, the
structure remains," is comprised of three manipulated blueprint images of

Manhattan; still another on the facing wall, is a series of large (approximately 36 X 48 inch) photocopies of Half Price (?) ... summarize Coop Himmelblau's principles, with the focus maneuvered closer and closer in each progressive image until, in the final one, the detail of an eye fills an entire image area; the last segment contains mixed photographic and photocopied images along with drawings.

Within the gallery space an information exchange is established and the exhibition components interface, image to image and wall to wall. This mandates that information ... each of the component images be categorized, stored ... necessary by the inhibitor in order to interpret the exhibition as a whole, and that this information can be ... from image to image for processing. The resulting exchange of information resembles an electrical and informational model ... along ... circuit ... by extending the electronic metaphor, image ... may ... suspended and ... readily, and be likened to electronic ... ... (here a human electricity, although in this case it is Storefront's ... which is architecture itself. Using this ... one makes available both a printed ... and a ... plan ... and then ... mediates the exhibition ... images ... ... exhibition circuit.

Storefront has been transformed metaphorically into a model, user-interpreted, space/text machine that presents Coop Himmelblau's graphic manifesto. My interpretation of this text proceeds from a three-part graphic outlining that breaks into 1) the architect's program (photographs and photocopy images); 2) the static, though manipulable city infrastructure (blueprints) and 3) the three initial images of actual projects, and the reading from those, especially the Open House, that

architecture has no stated or given form, that there are no preconceptions for it. Through the interplay of the models, this graphic information begins to flow from one section to another, creating a progressively more abstract statement that media is architecture as architecture is media, and that the flow of related environmental information is bound in an interdependent relationship that includes city circuits, architectural circuits, and physical circuits.

One particularly interesting and beautiful image, relevant to the use of the words "circuits" and "zoning," is a portrait of Prix and Swiczinsky, a drawing overlaying a very large photocopy of an actual photograph, where Coop Himmelblau has sketched itself in the same fast-and-free manner as it does ideas for structures or views of the city. Almost nothing here is immediately recognizable as portrait. Only after study can you follow a shoulder line or isolate a rectangle depicting eyes. Then it becomes clear that Coop Himmelblau has indeed done what it said it did: "In the last two years we realized that we began to describe our thoughts in the process of design with our hands, with our heads, and with our bodies. While working on city planning projects we began to draw on prints of our faces and our bodies, and immediately our eyes became the ground plan for the towers of the city; the noses and ears transformed into landscapes; and the shirts became a zoning plan. . . . ." Their portrait has become an image for a city or building plan, a drawn circuit that includes abstracted physical features integrated into schematic drawings. This portrait suggests that Coop Himmelblau views itself as part of a process, an equal partner of statics and structure, city and media, attempting to view architecture as a processing system and not as a system of sticks and stones or as a cult of fashion. Though easily mistaken for vanity, the repeated head-and-shoulders photographs of Prix and Swiczinsky

STROLL

Space/Text Machine

COOP HIMMELBLAU AT STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE

by Dennis L. Dollens

The show at Manhattan's Storefront for Art and Architecture by Coop Himmelblau was more than a first gallery presentation for the Austrian-based architectural office. It was a tough-minded graphic manifesto, a body of information and a textural machine. For viewers coming complacently, seeking didactic architecture, or for those Peeping Toms coming to sniff and run with a detail, an elevation, or a section, the exhibition was of little interest; it was graphically almost impossible to plagiarize. Adolf Loos's statement "I do not design plans, facades, sections, I design space" was relevant, though not fully descriptive of the drawings, processed images, and texts in the exhibition. The exhibition could be thought of as an integrated circuit in which graphic images replaced semiconductors, and drawings and collages-cum-maquettes stood in for resistors and capacitors. Like an electronic circuit, a directional flow of information was constantly being processed, schematically giving portions of the exhibition the feel of a printed-circuit board—appropriate to Coop Himmelblau's use of technological images made of FAX and photocopy graphics. These component images, never intended to stand alone graphically, fell into several groups. One photographically depicted three previous projects: the 1983 Open House, the 1987 Ronacher Theater, and the 1987 Paris/Melunt Senart City Plan; another, titled "The 1st new step into New York: the bodies dis-

appear, the structure remains," comprised three manipulated blueprint images of Manhattan; still another, on the facing wall, was a series of large (approximately 36 × 48 inch) photocopies of Wolf Prix and Helmut Swiczinsky, Coop Himmelblau's principals, with the focus maneuvered closer and closer in each progressive image until, in the final one, the detail of an eye filled an entire image; the last segment contained mixed photographic and photocopied images along with drawings.

An information exchange was established within the gallery space, and the exhibition components interfaced image to image and wall to wall. This mandated that information from each of the component images be retained, stored in memory, by the visitor in order to interpret the exhibition as a whole, and that the information be carried from image to image for processing. The resulting movement of information is analogous to electrical and informational routes along an actual circuit board. To further extend the electronic metaphor, three collage/models, two suspended and one freestanding, could be likened to electronic resistors modifying the flow of electricity, although in this case it was Storefront's traffic flow that was modified. Ironically, these three works each resembled both a printed-circuit board and a city plan, and each channeled and mediated the space between images, creating, in effect, an integrated

exhibition circuit.

Storefront was transformed metaphorically into a coded, user-interpreted, space/text machine that presents Coop Himmelblau's graphic manifesto. My interpretation of this text proceeds from 1) the architects' presence (photographs and photocopy images), 2) the static, though manipulable city infrastructure (blueprints) and 3) the three initial images of actual projects, and the essential reading (especially from the Open House) that architecture has no stated or given form, and that there are no preconceptions for it. Through the interplay of the models, this information began to flow graphically from one section to another, creating a progressively more intricate statement that media is architecture as architecture is media, and that the flow of related environmental information is bound in an interdependent relationship that includes city circuits, architectural circuits, and physical circuits.

One particularly interesting and beautiful image having to do with "circuits" and "zoning" was a portrait of Prix and Swiczinsky: a drawing overlaying a very large photocopy of an actual photograph, on which Coop Himmelblau sketched itself in the same fast-and-free manner as it does ideas for structures or views of the city. Almost nothing was immediately recognizable as portrait; only after study could one follow a shoulder line or isolate a rectangle depicting eyes. In the architects' words: "In the last

two years we realized that we began to describe our thoughts in the process of design with our hands, with our heads, and with our bodies. While working on city planning projects we began to draw on prints of our faces and our bodies, and immediately our eyes became the ground plan for the towers of the city; the noses and ears transformed into landscapes; and the shirts became a zoning plan. . . ." Their portrait became an image for a city or building plan, a drawn circuit that included abstracted physical features integrated into schematic drawings. This portrait suggested that Coop Himmelblau views itself as part of a process, an equal partner of statics and structure, city and media, attempting to view architecture as a processing system and not as a system of sticks and stones or as a cult of fashion. Though easily mistaken for vanity, the repeated head-and-shoulders photographs of Prix and Swiczinsky were more a pictorial digitalization confirming human involvement and fractionalized visualization, not demagoguery. The portrait sequence melded with Coop Himmelblau's intention to communicate an architectural idea outside the constraints of traditional architectural thinking and imagery, while still remaining faithful to their long tradition of manifestos.

Dennis L. Dollens is editor of Sites Magazine in New York.